126. RESOURCING OUR BRANCHES - A UNISON PRIORITY

Carried as Amended: 126.2

Conference notes that UNISON's branches are of key importance in the provision of support for members and their responsibilities are ever increasing. The reduction of employers in national bargaining arrangements and the significant fragmentation of the workforce point to this trend.

Many branches now deal with hundreds of employers, receiving no consolidated facility time and no additional resource.

Conference notes that the topic of branch resourcing has been debated for many years but there is now a pressing need to ensure branches have sufficient stable and sustainable resource levels.

As demands on the whole union increase, consideration now needs to be given to how the union as a whole is funded, so that branches can be resourced in a way that better meets the union's objectives and the needs of members with particular reference to direct organisational support for branches.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to ensure:

1) That a review of activity and expenditure at all levels of the union – national, regional and branch-level – is conducted to enable the prioritisation of union activity and expenditure with a view to redirecting additional resource to branches. This review will ensure that all UNISON spending, including the regional pool allocation, reflects the union's agreed objectives, is based on sound financial governance and ensures the highest levels of financial probity;

2) This review will be lay-member led and will commence immediately following Conference and be completed within two years. The review will be conducted by a review group comprising 12 members of the National Executive Council and one representative from each region;

3) Until completion of the review and agreement by Conference, an amended scheme of funding will be effective from 1st January 2020, based on the following principles for increasing branch funding:

    a) For branches with reserves at or greater than £16 per member, the current funding formula will continue to apply. No branch will receive a lower level of funding than under the current funding formula;

    b) Branches with reserves less than £16 per member will receive an increase in the standard entitlement of total annual subscription income from 20% to 25%;

    c) If a branch holds reserves under £16 per member, and an increase in the standard entitlement would take the branch above £16 per member in reserves, that branch will only receive that portion of the increase in the standard entitlement which would take them up to £16 per member in reserves.

4) That all additional percentage enhancements for branches with reserves below £16 per full member at the annual point of calculation will remain unchanged,

except for ‘Number 12: Branches with Multiple Employers’ which will be amended effective from January 1st 2020 as follows:

i) The number of employers relevant for the calculation will be employers which are defined as independent legal entities which have 5 or more UNISON members;

ii) Additional entitlements will follow these amended bandings:

A) More than 5 and less than 20: 0.5%;

B) More than 19 and less than 35: 1.0%;

C) More than 34 and less than 50: 1.5%;

D) More than 49 and less than 100: 2.0%;

E) More than 99 and less than 150: 2.5%;

F) More than 149 and less than 200: 3.0%;

G) More than 199 and less than 250: 3.5%;

H) More than 249 and less than 300: 4.5%;

I) More than 299 and less than 350: 5.0%;

J) More than 349 and less than 400: 5.5%;

K) More than 399: 6.0%.

iii) If a branch holds reserves under £16 per member, and an increase due to their multiple employer entitlement would take the branch above £16 per member in reserves, that branch will only receive that portion of the increase which would take them up to £16 per member in reserves;

5) To align with the current branch funding formula, for branches with less than 501 members an absolute reserves base of £8,000 will be used instead of £16 per member;

6) That the Activity-Based Budgeting system of budget ‘top-ups’ agreed at National Delegate Conference in 2016 will be deleted, in favour of the funding increase set out in points 3-5 above.

7) That the Regional Pool, under lay member control at Regional level, can continue to provide additional funding allocations to branches in support of UNISON’s organising agenda. During the period of the amended scheme of funding which will be effective from 1 January 2020 (outlined at point 3 above), the total funding allocation to the Regional Pool will be protected at the 2019 level of funding allocation to the Regional Pool.